

EDITOR'S PAGE

The Era of Electronic Publishing Is Here (Again)

When I was initially interviewed to be Editor-in-Chief of *JACC* over 8 years ago, I was assured that the print journal would soon disappear and be replaced by the electronic version carried on the Internet. However, surveys done shortly after I assumed the position indicated that the majority of readers preferred the print version. Several years ago we completely redesigned and enhanced the online presentation of *JACC*, adding a number of new features. However, the print journal continues to be very popular, especially with older cardiovascular specialists. With the recent introduction of the iPad (Apple, Cupertino, California), the consensus is that the delivery format now exists that will induce nearly all readers to consume the electronic version. While past experience has taught me to be cautious, I suspect the time is truly here when the journal will become predominantly an electronic publication.

The online journal has many advantages over the print journal. Articles can be posted online more rapidly than through the mail, and page limitations are no longer relevant. In addition to streaming video rather than stop-frame images, links enable rapid acquisition of articles cited by or citing the paper. The reader can elect to view only the figures, or can readily access Cardiosource or CVN video programs discussing the work when available. The online presentation offers the opportunity to make comments or raise issues about the paper, or to view the thoughts of others who have done so. Digital *JACC* also provides the opportunity to view specific article types, such as the Year In Cardiology series or Images in Cardiology.

Given the above and other advantages of online publication, it is surprising that so many of us have continued to primarily read the print issue. It has been generally believed that a major factor inhibiting the transition to reading the online version was the format in which it was presented. Computers are bulky and the monitors are not necessarily easy to read and do not allow for note-taking. With the advent of digital readers we felt that a suitable vehicle was becoming available to present the *Journal* in an attractive way. To this end, *JACC* became the second medical journal (after the *New England Journal of Medicine*) available on the Kindle (Amazon, Seattle, Washington). Although the Kindle presentation of the *Journal* is not perfect, it does provide some advantages over standard computers.

The new iPad has attributes that make it seem even better suited to the digital presentation of *JACC*. The screen is light, is easy to read, and delivers full color. The *Journal* can be read in either landscape or portrait format. The screen enables easy manipulation of the material and access to featured links with a touch of the finger. Of perhaps most significance, a journal is read the same way on the iPad as it would be in print. That is, one flips pages forward and backward in the horizontal plane, and scrolls down vertically to read an individual article. Importantly, advertisements in this format are presented exactly as they would be in print, rather than as sidebars. This addresses one of the major issues of an online journal, that is, the business model, or specifically how to attract advertising revenues. In regard to advertising, a simple touch can call up



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hidden material, set in motion a stop-frame image, or provide additional information for an advertisement. iPad-type readers may not be perfect, but for the first time they do seem to provide a vehicle that is very well suited to the presentation of a medical or any other type of journal. We believe that these devices have the potential to be transformational.

Given the attributes of this new generation of digital readers, the editors of the *JACC* journals along with our colleagues at Elsevier and Cardiosource have already begun the work of creating an online version of *JACC* for the iPad. Our goal is to have a dummy prototype ready for review by the time of the European Society of Cardiology meeting, and a functioning version by the time of the American Heart Association meeting. We plan for it to have all the advantages of an electronic journal with the additional benefit of a very attractive presentation. As with *JACC* on Kindle, we anticipate that there will be an additional fee to receive the *Journal* on the iPad; we are

betting that most readers will find it well worth the money.

Having been down this path before, I am reluctant to declare that the death of the print issue of *JACC* is imminent. In fact, except for the advertising, the iPad version of the *Journal* will have essentially the same features as current online version. However, it will be much more attractive to carry, operate, read, and manipulate. I suspect that we will soon be reading all of our magazines, books, and newspapers in this format. Although it is not certain, it does appear that the era of electronic journals has finally arrived, again.

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